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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY,  
MARCH 18, 2003

1. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for March 18, 2003. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

2. FIRST IMMIGRANT WAVE TO TURKISH BORDER (Sabah/Hurriyet/Milliyet) Migration from Kerkuk and Mosul has begun. During the migration convoys of 15 to 20 kilometers formed. Approximately 10,000 people are heading towards the villages of Amadiya, Sersing, Batufa and Begova that are across from the Turkish town Hakkari.

3. RESIDENTS IN KIZILTEPE REACT (Milli Gazete) The residents of Kiziltepe village reacted to Americans wanting to rent the state hospital. A delegation of eight Americans visited the hospital and gathered information concerning the capacity of the hospital. It is reported that residents are worried that the hospital will no longer be able to serve them in case the hospital also serves Americans.

4. U.S. ESTABLISHES SECOND BASE IN NUSAYBIN (Milli Gazete/Evrensel/Dunya) While preparations continue in Mardin and Kiziltepe, the U.S. is now preparing the Organized Industrial Zone in Nusaybin as a second "base". It is reported that the Zone is expected to be completed by March 23. The zone is a very large area, the equivalent of roughly six city blocks, and will include a helicopter landing area. A group of Americans also visited the Nusaybin train station and gathered information from officials.

5. NEVRUZ PREPARATIONS (Evrensel/Bolge/Cumhuriyet) Nevruz preparations continue across the country. The DEHAP provincial organization in Urfa held a press conference at the Harran Hotel and announced celebrations will take place at the local fairgrounds. In Tunceli, EMEP and DEHAP applied to the governorate for permission to celebrate Nevruz on March 21 at the town center. Despite the call from the Diyarbakir governorate to have mutual celebrations, the civilian and official activities will be held separately again this year. The Nevruz organization committee's request to include Kurdish music in the celebrations was turned down; consequently DEHAP, after getting support from non-governmental organizations, decided to have a separate celebration in Diyarbakir.

6. MARDIN WORRIED AND HELPLESS (Evrensel) Residents in Mardin, which is filled with U.S. soldiers, are worried and helpless. Due to the closing of the Habur border gate, the oil trucks are sitting idle in front of their owners' homes, and ever since the region has become the site for locating U.S. bases the economy has come to a halt. Workers have lost jobs, and those who are hired by American firms to work in construction are working at minimum wages.

7. PRESS CENTER IN MARDIN (Turkiye) In Diyarbakir, a press center has been established under the governorate where journalists receive accreditation cards and bullet proof vests. The press center is located at the first floor of Dedeman hotel.

8. AMERICANS ARE WEARING BULLET PROOF VESTS (Radikal) The U.S. has deployed 1000 military vehicles in Mardin, which has become the most important logistic base for the U.S. American

soldiers have began wearing bulletproof vests in the past two days, which they continue to wear during heavy work. This is interpreted as a sign that the possible war is close. The number of military vehicles that have arrived from Iskenderun by railway to the Mardin rope factory has increased.

HOLTZ